

Poplar Flowers as a Dye Stuff

I have found a way to make purple dye with poplar tree flowers! The thought came to me when I saw the snow turning purple and blue beneath freshly bloomed poplar flowers. I'm sure someone else somewhere has also figured this out.

I collected the most purple looking ones and stored them in a wooden basket for two years.

Here's how to get the purple dye:

Supplies:

At least a 1/4 cup of dried poplar flowers separated from stems and filtered through a strainer

Water

Vinegar

Mercerized cotton thread

Method:

Create a fixative bath with 1:4 ratio of vinegar to water.

Tye the thread into skeins so that it doesn't get tangled.

Add the thread, and simmer for an hour.

Meanwhile, add at least 1/4 cup of the poplar flowers to 2 cups of water.

Simmer the flowers for an hour as well.

Strain the dye bath into a container appropriately sized to the thread that you're using (I used a mason jar)

Gently squeeze the vinegar water out of the thread.

Submerge the damp thread in your dye for at least two hours for a light lilac hue.

Rinse the thread under cold water.

Allow the thread to air dry.

Notes:

It is optional to use more poplar flowers to strengthen the dye to achieve a darker finished product. The results of the two hour dye was a fairly light lilac purple. You can also dye for less or more time to achieve variances of hue.

Written by Marlo Johnson